

# COP 28: The United Nation's Framework Convention that Failed to Unleash Concrete Actions!

The Capitalist industrialization for centuries amplified the climate change, posing an existential threat to humanity. Global average temperature rise is already dangerously close to the limit. The window for restricting global heating to 1.5°C above pre-industrial level is rapidly closing.

Severe heat waves, droughts, forest fires, floods and extreme rainfall are already being witnessed more frequently across the world. The possibility of irreversible melting of polar and glaciers and sea-level rise are also being witnessed.

2023 has been devastating weather events of a disturbingly familiar patron. Extreme heat in North Africa and Europe, wild fires in Canada and Hawaii, flood in India and Libya and drought in Horn of Africa.

Unabated green-house gas emissions are triggering extreme weather events, air pollution, food insecurity, water scarcity and population displacement, which in turn are altering the Vector-bone diseases for which Africa, Asia, South and Central America and small islands are bearing the brunt.

In India air pollution is said to be the greatest threat to human health" and heat related deaths may kill an additional 10 lakh people annually by 2090. Changing weather patterns and rising temperatures are altering the life cycle of vector-bone diseases such as dengue and malaria; which disproportionately impact poorer and marginalized groups. The research shows that spread of dengue has increased in India over the last two decades. An estimate shows that 40% climate-related poverty would be due to direct health impacts, as people's income, productivity and health costs would soar.

A study published by University of Delaware says that loss and damage from climate change cost about \$1.5 trillion (\$ 1,500 billion) in 2022 and that several developing countries and some poorest countries lost an average of 8.3% of the GDP due to climate change.

Another estimate states that by 2030 emerging markets and developing economies will require \$ 2.4 trillion every year to address climate change.

This threat to the existence of humanity is caused by the highly developed industrialized capitalist countries during 20<sup>th</sup> century, by having disproportionately (highly excessively) emitting more carbon than their 'fair share', spelling the present-day disaster.

So, these industrially developed capitalist countries have to fear the responsibility to address the problem and its costs.

Since it is formally acknowledged that emissions from fossil fuels are the main culprit driving global warming and that 90% of carbon dioxide are the result of burning coal, oil and natural gas, the COP-28 has to concentrate on phasing out all the fossil fuels within a stipulated time.

The Conference also has to recognise fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – as a driver of health threats and emphasise the need to end fossil fuel dependence; since fossil fuels are seen as the largest contributor to global climate change.

But the developed capitalist countries refuse to take up their responsibility for their Carbon dioxide emissions in the past through the industrialization and refuse to foot the bill. Moreover, they are arguing that developing countries will account for the bulk future emissions, so attention should be focused on limiting emissions going forward.

Since for the past four decades the imperialist globalisation, has transferred its production and manufacturing activities to developing countries like China and India, for cheap labour costs and avoiding rigorous regulation, in the name of establishing 'supply chains', naturally the emissions in future would be on the rise. The developing countries are mostly dependent on fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas for their production and manufacturing activities, due to which there will be bulk emissions from these developing countries. However the imperialist transnational corporations benefit by raping super profits with the arrangement of supply chain production system. Hence it is not permissible to allow industrially developed capitalist countries to evade their past responsibility. The transnational corporations that have been gaining super-profits by making developing countries presently to make bulk emissions shall be made responsible and liable for the future bulk emissions and their remediation. But such a view is not taken in the COP-28 meetings and their decisions.

In 2009 developed countries had pledged to provide an arbitrary \$100 billion a year between 2020 and 2025. But the promises made by them have been broken. Thus, the question of adaptation of finance remains unsolved. From the last COP-27 there have been calls for a doubling of adaptation of finance, but the question 'who pays' is not decided.

But in COP-28 conference the member countries agreed to make operational loss and damage fund, receiving commitments for a meagre \$ 470 million, though billions of dollars are needed to meet its purpose of compensating the countries dealing with climate change.

Major world economies like the US refused to move away from fossil fuels, particularly the developed capitalist countries have committed only to give up coal but not oil and gas. It is noteworthy that fossil fuel companies had increased their presence in COP-28, often as members of official country delegations, gaining access to main

negotiation rooms to influence them. At COP-28 at Dubai their number is 2000, larger than any country's delegation. That was why the emphasis was only on phasing out coal but not on oil and gas in the draft declaration of COP-28.

That is why the COP-28 UAE declaration on climate and health does not mention fossil fuels. It does not mention pollution-related harms or identify 'fossil fuels' – coal, gas and oil – as a driver of health threat or emphasise the need to end fossil fuel dependence. In the negotiations the questions of clear water, clean air and sustainable cities are not discussed nor the declaration made mention about them.

The final declaration of COP-28 instead of calling for actual 'phase-out' of all fossil fuels has simply diluted in to "transitioning" away them fossil fuels in energy.

The small island states and other countries from Africa have criticised the careless attitude towards fossil fuels and lack of financial support announced.

Despite the grandiose of COP-28 at Dubai nothing much of substance has been gained at it. This U.N. Convention remained to be a formal convention like the previous ones, which failed to unleash concrete actions leaving all the problems where they were before.